



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

August, 2007

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I begin my tenure as TOS president I find the club to be in good shape. All its committees are functioning well: Finance, Records, Conservation, Publications etc. Individual chapters are functioning smoothly. We have things set for the fall 2007 meeting in Manchester and the spring 2008 meeting in Memphis. TOS members continue to enjoy our birding: backyard birds, bird counts, and various citizen science projects. We have long standing traditions, especially our publication *The Migrant* that has been going for many years and is well respected in the scientific community. In short, the TOS I will be leading is already functioning as a well-oiled machine. I expect that to continue with a little (or a lot of) attention on my part. And we are in the foreseeable future approaching our 100th anniversary (2015); not really that far off.

Membership is one issue I see we need to be aware of and to be working on. That is, bringing new people to the club, young people especially. I would like to challenge everyone to bring in one new member over the next year. We all know someone who is already very interested, who every time they see you has a new bird experience to share with you, or who ask you as their "bird expert" friend for bird ID help. Those folks are potential members. Invite them to the next program meeting or field trip, or meet them for an impromptu birding field trip. Give them a specific time and place and tell them you'll meet them there. Don't let them be intimidated, as I was many years ago, by the name "Ornithological Society". Let them know it's "the bird club", because in most of our communities TOS is the only birding club in town. Make them feel welcome and we will all benefit.

Richard Connors

MEMPHIS TO HOST SPRING MEETING

This information is provided to assist you in planning for the 2008 spring meeting. Full details and directions will be published in the next *Warbler*.

The Memphis chapter will host the annual spring meeting, April 25, 26 and 27th, 2008. Our headquarters will be at the Admiralty of Plantation Oaks, a full service hotel, located 2 miles south of the city of Millington on US Hwy 51. Rate is \$69.95 a night, all amenities and continental breakfast. Reservations may be made by calling 1-888-422-1459. Be sure to mention you are with TOS. This will be the site for the Saturday afternoon business meeting. Saturday dinner and program will be at the Piersol group camp at Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, 20 minutes from the hotel.

For those of you who don't mind going "rustic", the dormitories at the camp will be available, at no more than \$5.00 a night. Rooms sleep 6 – 8 in bunk beds. There are 20 rooms available, first come, first served. Please contact me directly to reserve a room (dickpreston@bigriver.net or H - (901) 837-3360). You must supply your own linens and deal with common showers/toilets. However, the dorms are set in the deep woods and the birding will be excellent. It will be a very short walk to the lodge for dinner. The price is also pretty good. The Park also has six cabins along the shore of Poplar Tree lake. They are fully equipped for food preparation and serving, housekeeping, and linens are provided. Each cabin will sleep up to a maximum of six people. Priced between \$60 and \$78, they may be reserved by calling the Park's visitor center at (901) 876-5215. If you desire this option, I wouldn't wait: these cabins generally book well in advance. There are a number of other, less desirable motels in the Millington area.

This weekend was chosen primarily so as to not conflict with the activities associated with Memphis-in-May. The real benefit is the weather is generally better and so is the birding. Queries should be directed to me, or chapter vice-president, Jay Walko (walko@bellsouth.net, H – (901) 853-3378). Hope to see there.

Dick Preston

TOS FALL MEETING - MANCHESTER, TN NOVEMBER 2, 3 & 4, 2007

The Highland Rim Chapter extends a cordial invitation to TOS members to attend the 2007 Fall Meeting, to be held in Manchester on November 2, 3 and 4.

The Ambassador Inn & Luxury Suites at 925 Interstate Drive (I-24, Exit 110) will be the headquarters for the event.. For reservations, call 931-728-2200 or 800-237-9228. A special room rate for TOS members may be announced later in a subsequent notice on the TOS website.

Directions to the Ambassador Inn

The Ambassador Inn is reached by taking Interstate 24 to Exit 110. The exit sign reads Manchester and Woodbury. The Ambassador sign and building are visible at one end of Interstate Drive as soon as you exit I-24. The Inn is within walking distance of Cracker Barrel, Oak Restaurant, and Crockett's. A Waffle House and a Mexican restaurant are also nearby.

Alternative Lodging

The following motels are located on or near Interstate Drive, and are close to the Ambassador Inn:
Hampton Inn (33 Paradise Street; 931-723-6363)
Economy Inn (890 Interstate Drive; 931-728-9383)

More details to be announced and posted on the TOS website once available.

TOS Conservation Policy Committee

Melinda Welton and Bob Hatcher, TOS Conservation Policy Committee Co-chairs

Increased Funding for Bird Conservation Issues

The House and Senate are still working on an Appropriations bill that could increase funding for both the State Wildlife Grants Program and the National Wildlife Refuge System. In March TOS sent letters to our Tennessee delegation in congress expressing our support for increased funding in both of these areas.

The State Wildlife Grants Program provides TWRA with essential funds for non-game management, conservation, and to implement the State Wildlife Action Plan. The increased funding for National Wildlife Refuge System would be used for operations & maintenance.

The final amount of the appropriation in the federal budget is still in negotiation. Unfortunately, at the end of June the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee suggested lower funding amounts for these and other bird-conservation issues than the House of Representatives. We'll let you know the final outcome in the next newsletter.

Good news on the Heart of the Cumberland Initiative

This 124,000 acre land deal is a big step closer to becoming a reality after a one-time \$82 million appropriation was approved in the final Tennessee State Budget this year. TOS sent many letters and made many phone calls in support of this funding to the State Appropriations Committee.

The other major partners in this project are The Nature Conservancy, TWRA, and Lyme Timber Company. This company has worked with TNC elsewhere in the country on other partnerships involving sustainable forestry.

This land deal is of major significance to Tennessee and the negotiations are extremely complex. It is significant because this project includes the heart of the Cumberland Mountains and includes some of the most biologically diverse real estate on the continent. The boundaries extend from Frozen Head State Natural Area to the northern part of Sundquist WMA in Scott, Campbell, Anderson, and Morgan Counties. Some of these 124,000 acres will be directly purchased and added to Frozen Head, others will include a 10-year timber lease to Lyme and then will revert to the state, and areas that are especially sensitive will have conservation easements governing sustainable forestry practices and public access. These "special management zones" include a huge amount of prime Cerulean Warbler nesting habitat. TWRA will eventually have management oversight over most of this land.

The partners are currently in intense negotiations on the final details of the plan. We hope to announce the successful completion of this project in the next newsletter.

Bald Eagle Delisted

On June 28, 2007 Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the removal of the Bald Eagle from Threatened status. In 1963, the lower 48 states were home to barely 400 nesting pairs and today there are over 10,000. This 25-fold increase in 40 years is a testament to what concerted conservation action can do to reverse the decline of a species. Even though the Bald Eagle will no longer be listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act it will receive special protections under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). Earlier in the year TOS submitted comments to help clarify some of the provisions in this Act to give landowners and others clear guidance on how to ensure that actions they take on their property are consistent with the Act. "Disturbance" of Bald and Golden Eagles is prohibited by the Act, even in Alaska, where they were never listed. The following new definition of "disturb" in the Act is:

"Disturb means to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to the degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available. (1) injury to an eagle, (2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with its normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (3) or nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with its normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior."

Details, including guidance for Bald Eagle management, and for preventing negative impacts that could violate the BGEPA, can be found at the USFWS eagle web site: www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/baldeagle.htm.

NAMC & Spring Count Data Due

2007 spring count data is due. If you have any data from our recent spring counts and/or North American Migration Counts (NAMC), please send the data to me at aves7000@bellsouth.net or to my home at 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716.

Please include the following effort data:

- 1 – Miles and hours by foot, car, and other modes (canoe, horse, etc.) for each party.
- 2 – Miles and hours for each night-birding (owling) party are kept separately.
- 3 – Feeder-watching hours are also kept separately; include names of feeder-watchers.
- 4 – All count day weather data: temps; wind; precipitation; clouds, storms/fronts.
- 5 – Please include the starting and ending times of the count.
- 6 – Please include the number of observers and field parties and the names of all the participants.

As always, thanks to all for your time and efforts.

Ron Hoff, TOS state count compiler

TOS Funds MoSI Research Stations

Winter survival of bird populations was a subject of lengthy and informative discussion at the recent TOS Spring meeting in Bristol. Tennessee State Ornithologist Scott Somershoe and Ron Hoff presented details on the MoSI Program (Monitoreo de Sobrevivencia Internal – Monitoring Overwintering Survival) that was established and is coordinated by The Institute for Bird Populations. Research work is carried out at 80 monitoring stations in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean and is performed entirely by volunteers. They currently rely on minimal financial support that is tenuous at best.

The research gathered from the MoSI stations is already providing insights into wintering ecology of many migratory landbird species. The major goal of the research will be the identification of habitat types and characteristics capable of providing quality habitat for a broad suite of declining bird species. Bird mortality rate due to loss of wintering habitat is increasing at an alarming rate. Put simply during the discussion, in spite of our best efforts at conservation in the continental United States, our work serves little purpose unless the overwintering grounds are protected that allow the birds to return north to breeding territory each year.

It was voted and unanimously approved that TOS should support two of these stations this year at \$300.00 apiece, a total support of \$600.00. Further, it was recommended that all local chapters be encouraged to sponsor a station if possible and to encourage their members to consider doing so individually. Memphis TOS has provided chapter funds for a monitoring station and Dick Preston and Mac and Susan McWhirter are sponsoring two additional stations. There probably are other chapters and individuals that have done the same across the state since the spring meeting and we hope to bring you news in the future as the support for this important program grows.

Congratulations, TOS, for taking a leading role in this critical program for conservation of overwintering grounds. You can read more about MoSI at www.birdpop.org.

Mac McWhirter

CHAPTER NEWS

In April, the members of the **BRISTOL BIRD CLUB** led walks at the Spring Birding Weekend at Natural Tunnel State Park in Duffield, VA. As usual, we enjoyed many neotropical migrants traveling through the area. Perhaps the best bird of the day was a Blackpoll Warbler that stayed long enough for most to get excellent views.

The Bristol Bird Club had the pleasure of hosting the 2007 Spring TOS Meeting, May 4-6, 2007. We want to express our appreciation for the many TOS members and other birders and naturalists who came to Bristol to enjoy excellent field trips and a great presentation by Dick Peake.

The outreach effort of the Bristol Bird Club was again very giving at the annual club picnic June 30th. Under the leadership of President Dave Worley, members donated 11 bags of black oil sunflower seed to the Steele Creek Park Nature Center. The seed is valued at \$190.00. That will keep those feeders busy for a few months.

Despite a mid-afternoon rainstorm, the skies cleared and the sun swept over BBC members and the picnic was again a fabulous success. Twenty-five birders brought food and appetites to the club's annual event. As an extra bonus, three members of the naturalist staff of the nature center took a good group to a nearby park cave where they were shown a Cave Salamander. Two or three birders left at dusk to go search for Whip-poor-wills along the park's eastern boundary.

President Worley returns for his third term as a BBC president and has led us through some of our most exciting years.

Vice-President Dr. John Moyle chatted a bit about a more aggressive and extended field trip program for the 2007-2008 club year. I overheard talk that the **BBC Rainforest Adventures Committee** has Ecuador in their dreams. The country is located on the west coast of South America. This may be the 2008 trip destination. In 2006 BBC birders went to Trinidad.

At the May meeting, new leaders were elected for 2007-2008. The officers elected were Dave Worley, President; John Hay, Vice-President of Programs; John Moyle, Vice-President of Field Trips; Janice Martin, Treasurer; Diana Worley, Secretary. Other officers and directors are to be appointed.

Bill Grigsby

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GREENEVILLE CHAPTER – Perhaps because of the late freeze that swept the region in early April, lower numbers of migratory songbirds were reported in Greene County than in recent years, and arrival dates for some species were markedly later. The season nonetheless produced quite a few notable observations, including the following:

American Bittern (late March until late April); Little Blue Heron (adult, 23 May); Merlin (2 in April); Virginia Rail (late March until late May at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center wetlands; at least 3 immatures seen more than once, suggesting the possibility of nesting); Sora (mid-April until late May at Wal-Mart, an immature observed on 29 May indicating possible nesting); American Golden-Plover (25 April); Solitary Sandpiper (higher than usual numbers throughout season); Dunlin (23 May); American Woodcock (at 3 sites); Eurasian Collared-Dove (seen in Mosheim in May for 35th consecutive month); Least Flycatcher (6 May); Cliff Swallow (now breeds regularly at many bridges in the county); Sedge Wren (3 on 28 April); Cerulean Warbler (observed on three dates); Swainson's Warbler (at 3 sites); Vesper Sparrow (several occurrences); Bobolink (10 May).

The chapter's fall count is scheduled for Saturday, 22 September. Greene is a large county, and any non-chapter birders participating in the count offer much-needed additional coverage. If interested, please contact Don Miller(pandion@earthlink.net)

Don Miller

At our April meeting, Charles Alexander, professional wildlife artist and long-time chapter member, presented a program on his trip to east Africa. Traveling through Rwanda and Tanzania, Charles visited many prime locations. Highlights included Volcanoes National Park and close encounters with Mountain Gorillas; The Serengeti, Ngorongoro Caldera, Lake Mangara and Tarangire. His extraordinary photographs of the many species of birds and mammals he encountered delighted the members and will serve as reference material for his wildlife paintings.

CHAPTER NEWS

Memphis Chapter - continued

On Saturday May the 12th, 23 chapter members took to the field to collect data for the North American Migration Count. Coinciding with International Migratory Bird Day, a total of 126 species were tallied in Shelby County. Other recent field trips produced some interesting sightings, including a pair of Roseate Spoonbills over Shelby Forest! A pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested on Presidents Island and a White-winged Dove appeared in Memphis.

At our May meeting, Knox Martin, Director of the Mid-South Raptor Center and long-time chapter member, presented a program on his trip to southern Australia. In three weeks Knox visited many sites around Melbourne, Adelaide, Deniliquin, Alice Springs and Sydney. A list of over 250 species included such sought after specialties as Plains-wanderer, Malleefowl, Superb Lyrebird, Musk duck, Bourke's Parrott and Laughing Kookaburra. Among the many mammals were Common Wombat, Koala and Echidna. Visits to Uluru (Ayer's Rock) and Sydney Harbor, with it's famed Opera House were also highlights.

Following the lead of the State, the chapter contributed \$300 to the Institute for Bird Populations to sponsor a mist-net site where birds will be counted and banded. Three members contributed another \$600 to sponsor an additional two sites. These efforts to monitor Neotropical migrants in their Central and South American homes are vital in identifying and protecting critical habitat.

The chapter provided speakers and information display booths for Earthfest and International Migratory Bird Day, reaching almost 10,000 people.

The chapter will host the State annual spring meeting, April 25, 26 & 27, 2008. See the preliminary details elsewhere in this issue.

Dick Preston

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Folks in **NASHVILLE CHAPTER** TOS were treated in April to a wonderful visit via slides to Ecuador, the Amazon Rainforest, and the Galapagos Islands. Member Ed Byrne shared his slides and memories in

a delightful program. In May we had a fun program night during which we played "Jeo-birdy Challenge". Most recently Tami Coleman led us in a "Climate Project Slideshow", an outgrowth of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. There is much to be learned from this program and the effect of global warming on the birds.

Field Trips have included great spring walks at Beaman Park, Ellington Agricultural Center, Radnor Lake, and the Warner Parks. Local, and very birdy. The lack of leaves because of the April freeze allowed us much better-than-usual looks at the birds. In June we hiked on the Millennium Trail at Edgar Evins State Park. Many birds were seen carrying food to nestlings. This was an excellent trip in a location new to many of us.

For six weeks this spring we led Wednesday morning walks at Radnor Lake. We had some excellent birding, and gained a few new members as a result of this outreach program.

Once again NTOS joined a host of other organizations at the Tennessee Critters Day at Bicentennial Mall in downtown Nashville. Sponsored by State Parks, this is a day designed to introduce many school children to the wildlife of Tennessee.

Our conservation award this year went to an Urban Bird Camp sponsored by the Metro Parks. NTOS member Susan Bradfield is an important player in this summer program. We were able to sponsor a dozen kids for a week. Wild and wonderful

Susan Hollyday

In Memory

*Bob Brown, Nashville Chapter
Died May 13, 2007*



K. Dean Edwards, Secretary

This spring the Tennessee Bird Records Committee reviewed 30 reports of rare bird sightings from across the state. A full report on the reviews will be included in a forthcoming issue of *The Migrant*. New species accepted to the Official State Checklist from this round of reports include Cackling Goose, Greater Shearwater, South Polar Skua, and Black-throated Sparrow. Two new records of Western Grebe with photographs were accepting moving the species off of the Provisional List.

Also noteworthy are the second accepted records for Mottled Duck, Clapper Rail, and Inca Dove and the first winter record of Painted Bunting. Records were accepted for post-Katrina sightings of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Magnificent Frigatebird, Sooty Tern, Black Skimmer, and Long-tailed Jaeger along with the aforementioned Greater Shearwater and South Polar Skua.

The Committee wishes to thank everyone that submitted sighting reports and continues to encourage new submissions. In particular, there are several species which have been reported in Tennessee but have not been submitted to the TBRC. Report forms and instructions can be found on-line on the TBRC page of the TOS Website.

OCTOBER 31ST DEADLINE

The deadline date for the December issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is October 31st. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

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